

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended): A method of identifying a modulator of chondrogenesis comprising:

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- (a) providing primary limb mesenchymal cells capable of differentiating into chondroblasts or chondrocytes;
 - (b) transiently transfecting the cells with a nucleic acid construct comprising a reporter gene that comprises a sequence that binds to an endogenous protein in the cells that is changed is detectable upon chondroblast or chondrocyte differentiation;
 - (c) adding a test compound to the transfected cells; and
 - (d) determining the effect of the test compound on the reporter gene activity, wherein a change in reporter gene activity as compared to a control indicates that the test compound modulates chondroblast or chondrocyte differentiation.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled).

4. (Currently amended): A method according to claim 1 wherein the reporter gene comprises ~~encodes~~ an enhancer element that binds to a transcription factor whose activity changes during chondroblast differentiation.

5. (Original): A method according to claim 4 wherein the reporter gene is responsive to the transcription factor Sox9.

6. (Currently amended): A method according to claim 5 wherein the nucleic acid construct comprises at least one Sox9 binding site, and further comprises a promoter and a detectable marker.

7. (Original): A method according to claim 6 wherein the nucleic acid construct contains four Sox9 binding sites.

8. (Original): A method according to claim 6 wherein the marker encodes a luciferase or an enhanced green fluorescent protein.

9. (Original): A method according to claim 6 wherein the nucleic acid construct is pGL3(4X48)-luciferase as shown in Figure 6.

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10. (Original): A method according to claim 6 wherein the nucleic acid construct is pGL3(4X48)-enhanced green fluorescent protein as shown in Figure 6.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently amended): A method according to claim 1 wherein the cells form a confluent monolayer with precartilaginous condensations evident within 24 hours are ~~plated at high density~~.

13. (Original): A method according to claim 1 wherein the test compound is a nucleic acid molecule comprising a test gene that is transfected into the cells.

Claims 14-26: (Canceled).

Appl. No. 09/957,456
Amdt. Dated July 21, 2003
Reply to Office action of April 22, 2003

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figures 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets